

Visitors to Schools Policy – SO-0327

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Policy lead	Education Directorate
Distribution	Schools
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EQUALITY STATEMENT

We will regularly review our policies to ensure that we are

- promoting equality of opportunity
- eliminating discrimination and harassment
- valuing diversity and promoting positive relationships
- providing an inclusive education which enables all pupils to develop their full potential
- meeting the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and the protected characteristics therein.

QUALITY OF LIFE FRAMEWORK

All NAS schools and Children's services follow our Quality of life (QoL) Framework. In implementing this framework, we listen to pupils, parents and the child's keyworker to understand what is important to them in relation to their quality of life. We then work as a transdisciplinary team to ensure we plan each child's education carefully and cohesively, shaping each pupil's provision around their EHCP and agreed developmental goals in order to develop pupils' knowledge and skills now and for the future.

1. Purpose of this document

To outline the NAS Education Directorate's policy for NAS schools' approach to visitors in our schools. The intention is to ensure that visits to schools are regulated, accompanied and vetted as appropriate to ensure the safety of all pupils and staff.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all schools and all visitors to our schools.

3. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- DfE (2023) 'Keeping children safe in education 2023'
- Childcare Act 2006
- Education Act 1996
- Home Office (2023) 'Prevent duty guidance: England and Wales'
- DfE (2022) 'Political impartiality in schools'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- DBS Policy
- Contractors Policy
- Volunteer Policy
- Prevent Duty Policy
- Data protection
- Tech / mobile phones policy

4. Safeguarding

Prior to arranging a visit, the Principal will ensure careful consideration is given to the suitability of the person or organisation. This will include an assessment of:

- Whether relevant checks will be required, and have been completed. The school is committed to promoting the safety of all pupils and may require visitors to undertake a DBS check depending on the purpose of their visit
- Whether the visit could bring the school into disrepute.
- How compatible the visit is with the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.
- Level of disruption to the pupils

- The educational value of the visit, how it maps into the curriculum of the school or enhances the experience of pupils at the school.
- The age appropriateness of the content or the workshop that is going to be delivered to pupils.

The suitability of potential speakers and agencies will be scrutinised by the Principal.

A visitor will require an enhanced DBS check with children's barred list information if they will be undertaking 'regulated activity' at the school.

For visitors at the school in a professional capacity, the school will check their ID upon arrival and receive assurance that the visitor has had the appropriate DBS check. The school will not ask to see the DBS certificate in these circumstances.

DBS checks will be undertaken in accordance with the DBS Policy.

The DSL and Principal will be responsible for determining whether DBS checks need to be carried out and ensuring that they are undertaken, where required.

All visitors with the PUPILS will be escorted

Under no circumstance will a visitor who has not undergone a DBS check be left unsupervised with pupils. The school will manage the risk of potential harm to pupils by taking steps to segregate pupils from visitors.

The school will adhere to the Prevent Duty Policy at all times when managing the risk of potential harm to pupils from visitors.

Where professionals are visiting to see a specific child / young person we will always seek the permission of the parents and the young person as appropriate beforehand.

5. Approach

Visitors are welcomed and their contribution recognised to the role of the school. To ensure minimal disruption to pupils, visits are limited to specific individuals or groups, and these may need to be prioritised. These individuals or groups include parents or prospective parents of autistic children, medical professionals, Social Workers, professionals associated with individual pupils, professionals from other NAS/LA establishments. Other visits which are deemed appropriate at the Principal's discretion.

Please refer to **Ensuring the Security of Services Policy and Procedure SO-0329** for list of visitors who are entitled to enter NAS premises.

6. Objectives

NAS schools seek to promote community links and professional partnerships whilst maintaining best interests and minimal disruption to pupils.

7. Visiting Procedures

A staff member must authenticate all visitors and ensure:

Our pupils thrive in a safe, predictable and low arousal environment. Visits can be disruptive and unsettling for our pupils and as such they all need to be carefully timetabled and planned. It is best practice for all visitors seeing the pupils to have their photos and brief information about their visit shared with the pupils before and during their visit.

While visiting our sites visitors will be aware of the following:

No nuts to be brought onto, or consumed on school sites

No smoking in or on any part of the school site

Visitor must not be under the influence of drugs or alcohol

Aggressive / abusive / threatening behaviour towards pupils or staff not tolerated and police may be called

Visitors names, business, car registration number, in and out times must be recorded in the approved visitors' book / or within electronic signing in systems at Reception

- Visitor(s) provide photo ID in the form of a current valid driving licence or passport (and DBS paperwork if available)
- All visitors will be required to read Emergency Evacuation / Fire Procedures when signing the visitor's book on arrival.
- All visitors will be given information on what do if they have a safeguarding concern and how to report a concern through our whistleblowing processes
- Visitors wear their visitors' badge at all times
- Visitors with no ID will not be allowed on-site as their identity cannot be established; this will not apply where the visitor is already known to a senior leader and is part of the wider National Autistic society team / member of the local governing body or trustee and where they are included on the Single Central Register
- Visitors will be accompanied at all times during their visit
- It is expected that during any visit to our schools, the pupils will be treated with respect and dignity at all times
- If an incident involving a pupil occurs during a visit to a school site follow the instructions provided by staff at all times
- Visitor(s) who are not expected will be retained in Reception until a member of SLT has spoken with them regarding the purpose of their visit; they will not be admitted beyond Reception
- Upon visitor(s) leaving, Reception staff must require the visitor(s) to sign out, and retrieve the visitor badge provided
- Should an incident occur, visitors should not attempt to become involved unless essential to prevent injury. Direction must be taken from staff and if asked to leave must do so immediately.

Schools have a duty to follow the infection control guidance in

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-protection-in-schools-and-other-childcare-facilities>

- Should any visitors have any infectious conditions, such as chicken pox, CV-19, diarrhoea, they must not come on site. Likewise, if there are any reportable infectious cases in school visitors will be asked to reschedule their visit for their own wellbeing.
- When on site visitors are encouraged to follow protocols, such as thorough handwashing. Hand sanitisers are available

Visitors personal belongings:

The National Autistic Society cannot accept any responsibility for personal belongings.

Use of mobile phones and photography equipment

- Visitors must not use mobile phones / technology with camera/video capability at all while on school sites, unless permission has been agreed by the principal.

Additional information:

- Visitors must only use staff or visitors' toilets.
- Principals /designated deputies reserve the right to cancel or refuse any visit if there is any risk or health and safety issue.
- Requests for research projects to be undertaken at the discretion of the Principal, who will discuss with the Head of Research, Evaluation and Monitoring. A condition of any research will be that a summary of findings will be forwarded to the school on completion and prior to any publication.
- Pupils confidentiality must be respected at all times and pupil's identification must not be divulged in any staff research or projects without the appropriate consent.
- Where schools use outside professionals to deliver educational sessions or act as visiting speakers' schools should undertake an assessment of the education value, age appropriateness of what is going to be delivered and be confident of the content and message delivered by visiting speakers.
- Materials to be delivered by external speakers should be discussed prior to delivery and any resources viewed.

8. Responsibilities

All staff have a responsibility to follow this policy.

Staff must notify Reception in advance of any expected visitor(s).

All members of staff must, when safe to do so:

- approach directly, or alert a colleague to, any person who is not displaying a visitor badge so they can be escorted to Reception and officially signed in, or be required to vacate the site immediately
- approach directly, or alert a colleague as appropriate to the circumstances, to any visitor(s) who appears to be acting suspiciously
- approach directly, or alert a colleague to anyone who appears to be in the wrong zone to establish if they are lost or require assistance

If an unauthorised person is on-site and refuses to leave, dial 999, or follow the evacuation policy.

9. Evaluation of policy

Principals will monitor the implementation of this policy and provide feedback to the policy lead. This policy will be reviewed on a bi-annual basis.

10. References

Ofsted
Department for Education
Purchasers Contracts
Contract for the Placement of Children and Young People in Day and Residential Independent & Non-maintained Special Schools
NAS Standard Terms and Conditions

11. Related policies

Data Protection Policy IGP-02
Records Management Policy IGP-04
School Staff Making Home Visits Policy SO-0323